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The Widow Burden, Three Nights After Her Husband's Funeral

by Robert Cooperman

My husband's dead,
yet all I can think of
is William Eagle Feather
and our one encounter
in mountain air
crisp as autumn apples.

Skinning a rabbit,
he smiled politely
at a harmless stranger:
his face, lovely sandstone;
hair black as a racing stallion
in repose; his eyes,
my aunt's rich morning coffee.

I doubt he even saw me
as a woman; he needs a squaw
who can ride bareback,
fire an arrow, thrust a dagger,
and drop child after child.

My dry womb nudged Thomas
toward Mary LaFrance.
I'd have lavished on an infant
the love my husband never
required of me,
once he realized
I couldn't give him a son.

To be continued in future issues

These poems are part of a collection entitled *The Widow's Burden*.

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